Tomorrow is New Moon day. Is it the wish of the Hon'ble Members that we shall meet at the usual hour or a little later?

(Some voices: At the usual hour).

Then we will meet at the usual time.

VOTING OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (cont.)

1 Land Revenue—Rs. 3,58,296

Mr. A. Madhava Prabhu *(Diwan Peishkar):* Sir, I beg to move for a grant of Rs. 3,58,296 under "Land Revenue". There is no special feature in this year's budget and therefore I am not making any speech. As and when the cut motions are moved I shall answer them.

CUT MOTION No. 6

Excluding certain agriculturists from payment of land-tax

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Sir, I rise to move "*to reduce the allotment of Rs. 90,979 for establishmet—Salaries—by Re. 1.*' The object of my motion is *to discuss the justice and expediency of excluding agriculturists getting an income of Rs. 600 and less per annum from payment of Land Revenue.* I may submit before the House that my intention to raise a discussion on this issue is not based purely on ideological grounds or on theoretical grounds nor is it my desire to jump into Utopia irrespective of considerations of practicability. I have only to put two short questions on this issue. The first is as to why are you excluding people in other professions from payment of income when their income is below Rs. 2,000? The answer is clear that the Government consider that the persons in other occupations do reqire about 2,000 rupees for their maintenance and daily necessaries of life, so that they may contribute to the good of the body economic by their exertions. I raise this question. Are the Government not aware that the agricultural profession, if I may say so, is more important than any other profession in the world? I need not go any further on this. It is plain. Will a trader get on without agriculture? Will anybody as for that matter live a day without agriculture? Therefore I can boldly assert that agriculture is perhaps the basic industry and the basic profession in the whole world. If that is so why is it that there is no consideration for the maintenance of an agriculturist? An agriculturist who owns two paras of paddy field and their number is legion in these days of fragmentations of holdings may not be making more than 10 paras per annum. He will not make more than 4 paras of paddy per para of paddy field. The late Mr. Sankara Menon's report will support me when I say that and if it is 8 paras of paddy he gets only 10 rupees according to the Government rate. Sir, Government are demanding from such an agriculturist one-fourth of that income. Rs. 2—8—0 out of Rs. 10 putting it at one rupee 4 as. per para of paddy. If such is the incidence of revenue in the State I say it is unjustifiable. If the understanding is that because the agriculturist is using public land for raising his income, I ask this question wheter a trader is not using public utilities of the State for maintaining his trade? Does he not require the roads to take things to his go-down, does he not require the backwaters to carry his goods? These are common property. Even the trader requires the backwaters for taking his merchandise. If he requires the roads and the backwaters to take his merchandise to his go-down and to the bazar, is he not also bound to pay some tax? Should you not collect 2½ rupees from a trader who makes Rs. 10. That is the second point that arises. Do you not consider the encouragement of the agricultural industry as the most important thing that is possible? Has it not been recognised all over the world? Is not this taxation inequitable?

The next statement I have to make is this, that this is one of the programmes, constructive programmes, of the Indian National Congress, passed unanimously in the Lucknow or Tripuri Congres that a bare subsistence minimum should be given to the agriculturists free from all taxation. That was also the subject of a Bill brought before this House by that strong advocate of the agriculturists, I mean, Mr. Ibrahim the Agriculturists' Bare Subsistence Bill. There is a lot of weight behind it. It was not considered properly.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* But then you opposed it.

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Not the principle never, unless I were drunk. Mathai sober will never oppose that measure.

Therefore, Sir, with these remarks I would place this most important matter for the earnest consideration and discussion of this House.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly